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Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference

Modalities for the third International Conference on Financing for Development

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/68/L.49

Thirtieth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/68/L.49 on the modalities for the third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/C.5/68/24). During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 18 June 2014.

2. In the introduction to his statement, the Secretary-General indicated that the third International Conference on Financing for Development responded to a mandate from the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, held in Doha in 2008.

3. As indicated in paragraph 2 of the statement, under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 21 and 22 of draft resolution A/68/L.49, the General Assembly would, inter alia: decide that the Conference be held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015; emphasize the need for effective coordination between the preparatory process for the Conference and the preparations for the summit to be

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held in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda; request the President of the General Assembly, in consultations with Member States, to provide a programme of work, from within existing resources; request that the first draft of the outcome document be prepared by the co-facilitators on the basis of informal consultations, taking into account inputs from Member States and presented by February 2015; and request the Secretary-General to provide all appropriate support to the work of the preparatory process of the Conference and to the Conference itself.

II. Resource implications of the proposals

4. As indicated in sections V and VI of the statement, the proposals of the Secretary-General, pursuant to the draft resolution, would entail additional resource requirements in the amount of $1,808,700 for the biennium 2014-2015, comprising $1,727,500 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services; $18,200 under section 12, Trade and development; and $63,000 under section 28, Public information. The activities to be undertaken in relation to the proposals of the Secretary-General are outlined in paragraphs 4 to 15 of his statement. The Advisory Committee makes comments and recommendations, where relevant, in the paragraphs below.

III. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

5. Section IV of the statement of the Secretary-General contains the planned activities set out below to be undertaken in the implementation of the draft resolution, at an estimated cost of $1,727,500 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services.

Third International Conference on Financing for Development

6. As indicated in paragraph 3 above, the Conference will be held in Addis Ababa over a four-day period, from 13 to 16 July 2015, pursuant to operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution. It is anticipated that, during the four-day period, six meetings with interpretation in all six official languages of the United Nations will be held each day, for a total of 24 meetings. The Secretary-General further indicates that the request for documentation contained in operative paragraphs 1 (d) and 12 of the draft resolution would entail the production of one post-session document and that the Government of Ethiopia, as the host, would need to defray additional costs directly or indirectly involved, in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243.

Thematic sessions, interactive hearings, informal consultations and the organization of work of the Conference

7. In paragraphs 7 to 12 of his statement, the Secretary-General outlines several activities, including meetings, sessions, interactive hearings and informal

consultations, to be undertaken in preparation for the Conference, pursuant to operative paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of the draft resolution. In particular, 20 meetings would be held for thematic substantive sessions and 26 meetings for informal sessions and drafting sessions.

8. The Advisory Committee notes that the activities proposed by the Secretary-General include an estimated total of 60 meetings with interpretation in all six official languages to be held for additional consultations and drafting sessions, pursuant to operative paragraph 13 of the draft resolution. The estimated number of meetings is based on the experience of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals between March 2013 and February 2014. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that because a large number of delegations, including representatives from civil society and the private sector had participated in the meetings of the Open Working Group, interpretation had been considered necessary. The Committee was further informed that, given the specific nature of the process for the third International Conference, it was anticipated that participating delegates and other stakeholders with special expertise would expect services similar to those that had been provided to the Open Working Group.

9. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, while the Open Working Group meetings had been spread over a two-year period, most of the consultations related to the preparatory process for the Conference on Financing for Development would be held during the six-month period from January to June 2015.

10. **The Advisory Committee takes note of the significantly shorter six-month time frame for the planned consultations and questions whether the estimated number of 60 additional meetings over that period is realistic. In addition, the Committee is of the view that because every preparatory process is unique in terms of activities and participation, the experience of the preparatory process for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals might not be a reliable basis for the resource estimates relating to the Conference on Financing for Development. Therefore, the Committee recommends a reduction of $222,800 in the additional resource requirements requested under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, representing an approximate reduction of 20 meetings. Should further resources be required, they should be reflected in the related performance report.**

11. The Advisory Committee notes that, in paragraph 8 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly invited the Economic and Social Council to contribute to the preparation of the Conference, as appropriate, including through its 2015 special high-level meeting with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Committee also notes the request of the Secretary-General for additional resources in the amount of $18,200 under section 12, Trade and development, to provide for the travel of two UNCTAD staff members from Geneva to New York to participate in the 2015 special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the travel of one UNCTAD staff member from Geneva to New York to service the informal consultations and drafting sessions for the preparation of the outcome document.

12. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the participation of the UNCTAD Geneva-based staff in the special high-level meeting depended

primarily on the topic to be discussed. In this particular case, the Committee was informed that the participation of the two staff members was based on their specific high-level expertise in relation to the cutting edge work of UNCTAD on systemic financial issues in areas such as debt, volatile capital flows and unstable exchange rates, which would be discussed at the Conference and during its preparatory process. As to the reason why the UNCTAD office in New York could not undertake that function, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the New York office performed functions that included attending relevant meetings in New York, liaising with Geneva as necessary and promoting the objectives of UNCTAD at United Nations Headquarters through interaction with relevant actors based in New York or Washington, D.C., including United Nations system entities, diplomatic missions, members of the press, research organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as technical assistance agencies in the areas of trade, investment, technology and development. The Committee was also informed, however, that the office did not have subject matter experts who could provide substantive inputs to the preparatory processes of major conferences, such as the third International Conference on Financing for Development.

13. **While recognizing the importance of UNCTAD participation at the meeting, the Advisory Committee nonetheless believes that UNCTAD should absorb the travel costs of its staff, given that the special high-level meeting of the Council was an annual event in which UNCTAD regularly participates. In addition, the Committee is of the view that UNCTAD New York-based staff should be able to represent the organization in the informal consultations and drafting sessions. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the request of the Secretary-General for additional resources in the amount of $18,200 under section 12, Trade and development, of the regular budget for the biennium 2014-2015.**

14. In paragraphs 14 and 18 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicated that, pursuant to operative paragraph 22 of the draft resolution, additional resources amounting to $63,000 would be required for the Department of Public Information to support the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Department would begin promotional activities in 2014 to raise awareness of the Conference.

15. The activities to be undertaken in 2014 would include the preparation of brochures and posters at a cost of $6,000; the production of two videos for $10,000 and the allocation of $15,500 in seed funds to the United Nations information centres. The activities to be undertaken in 2015 would include the production of 10,000 press kits in New York, which would require external printing and translation for a total of $20,000; an additional video for $5,000; additional funding of $4,500 for the information centres; and the webcast streaming and storage of the Conference webcast for $2,000.

16. **The Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the $63,000 for the planned activities to be undertaken by the Department of Public Information to support the work of the preparatory process and the Conference itself. However, given that it is still relatively early in the biennium, the Committee encourages the Department to make every effort to absorb the additional expenditures within its existing resources and to report any variances in the relevant performance reports.**

Summit in September 2015

17. The Secretary-General indicated in para. 15 of his statement that the venue and modalities for the summit to be held in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda were yet to be finalized. In the absence of such details, therefore, the Secretary-General indicated that it was not possible at the time to determine the resource implications for the meetings and documentation required to implement operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution. He also indicated that as soon as that information was available, he would submit a request for additional resources in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

IV. Conclusion

18. The Advisory Committee recalls General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, according to which the programme budget should include a contingency fund expressed as a percentage of the overall budget level, to accommodate additional expenditures relating to the biennium derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the available balance of the contingency fund for the current biennium, which had been established at $22,338,043 by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247, was $16,421,300 as at 17 June 2014.

19. **In line with its comments and recommendations contained in paragraphs 10, 13 and 16 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/68/L.49:**

(a) **A revised appropriation of $1,504,700 would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management;**

(b) **The related amount of $1,504,700 would be charged to the contingency fund for the biennium 2014-2015.**